



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Louisiana Recovery Office
1 Seine Court, 4th Floor
New Orleans, Louisiana 70114

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
ELMWOOD/CLEARVIEW DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
METAIRIE, LOUISIANA
FEMA-1603-DR-LA

BACKGROUND

The Elmwood/Clearview Drainage Improvement project is located in the western portion of Metairie, Louisiana, Jefferson Parish. The project is located approximately 1.5 miles from the Mississippi River and approximately 3 miles from Lake Pontchartrain. Jefferson Parish proposes to construct drainage improvements for the Elmwood/Clearview area to reduce flooding damage in the area. Clearview Parkway between the Earhart Expressway and Jefferson Highway experiences frequent flooding during rain events. Flooding also occurs to the surrounding industrial complex of the Elmwood area. Clearview Parkway was constructed in the 1970's at ground level in a low lying area that previously functioned as a drainage collection sump, which at that time, was largely undeveloped. Since its construction, increased development in the basin has exacerbated the frequency, depth, range, and duration of the flood events to unacceptable levels. As a result, Jefferson Parish (Applicant) has requested federal funding through FEMA's 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to construct drainage improvements to St. Peter's Ditch, construction of a new, larger pump station, and construction of a earthen berm along the Earhart Expressway for flood protection in the Elmwood/Clearview area.

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA regulations to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared. The purpose of the EA was to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with construction of drainage improvements summarized above, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The need for the proposed action is to protect the Clearview Parkway near its interchange with the Earhart Expressway from flooding. Clearview Parkway is a heavily trafficked roadway with more than 66,000 vehicles utilizing the route every day. In addition, the Clearview Parkway is a major north-south corridor available as a hurricane evacuation route as it represents the main access to this area for Westbank residents using the Huey P. Long Bridge to Interstate 10 and Airline Highway (Highway 61). The Clearview Parkway/Earhart Expressway interchange serves as the transportation hub of the Elmwood Industrial Park Area, Elmwood Shopping Center, and the Jefferson Parish Government Complex at the Yenni Building. The proposed action would reduce the risk of future damage from flooding. The alternatives considered include 1) No Action, 2) Elevating Clearview Parkway approximately 3.0 feet at its Earhart Expressway crossing (Rejected), 3) Major canal modifications to divert the drainage area storm water southward into the Mississippi River via a new pump station

(Rejected) and 4) Construction of drainage improvements to St. Peter's Ditch, construction of a new, larger pump station, and construction of a earthen berm along the Earhart Expressway (Proposed Action).

Due to the size and complexity of the project, the applicant proposes to construct the project in phases. The phases of plan for which FEMA funding would be used include:

Phase III C and D – St. Peter's Ditch, which approximately 4,500 linear feet in length, would be improved from the West Metairie Canal (Canal # 5), at West Metairie Avenue, to the Earhart Expressway and Clearview Parkway interchange and the Cross Canal.

Under Phase III C, beginning at the West Metairie Canal (Canal #5), approximately 1,700 linear feet of 6.5-foot x 10-foot box culvert would be replaced with double 6-foot x 6-foot culverts, which would be placed below ground. This area of St. Peter's Ditch consists of right-of-way owned by Jefferson Parish. The next approximately 832 linear feet of existing open ditch would be replaced by 6 foot x 12 foot concrete U-flume. The concrete flume would be approximately 3 feet in height and would form a U-shape, including concrete sides on the banks and a concrete bottom. The next approximately 2,013 linear feet of open ditch would be replaced by two 6-foot x 6-foot box culverts or 6-foot x 12-foot U-flume. During construction, two active rail tracks, one inactive rail track, a section of Airline Highway, and the parking lot at Harry's Dive Shop, would be removed and replaced. In addition, a wooden bridge would be removed. An existing concrete culvert located near the wood bridge would be removed and replaced. The proposed culvert would be sloped from an invert of -10.0 feet NAVD88 at Cross Canal to an invert of -14.0 feet NAVD88 at Canal #5 and the West Metairie Avenue intersection to allow water to flow northward into Canal #5.

The newly constructed U-flume would be an extension of one that was previously constructed. The proposed U-flume would run from north of Airline Highway to the West Metairie Canal in areas where St. Peter's Ditch is at the surface. In areas where St. Peter's Ditch is below the surface, box culverts will be installed.

Under Phase III D, Jefferson Parish proposes to construct an earthen berm on the south bank of the Cross Canal. The berm would be approximately 2,000 feet long and approximately 2.5 feet high. The berm would be constructed to the BFE, plus one foot for freeboard. The actual height of the earthen berm would vary, depending on the actual ground elevation at each particular location. The eastern end of the proposed berm begins at 29.969817, -90.182935. The western end of berm ends at the Camp Plauche Ditch (29.969018, -90.191571). The earthen berm would be sloped 3:1 and would be approximately 28 feet wide.

Phase IV – Jefferson Parish proposes to construct a new 220 cfs pump station on a currently vacant lot near the existing 34 cfs pump station. The proposed site is south of the Cross Canal at the intersection of the St. Peter's Ditch. The new pump station must be located adjacent to the St. Peter's Ditch in order to function as intended. The new

pump station would be similar in appearance to the existing pump station and would likely have two 48-inch pipes, and a ten-foot wide footprint.

Jefferson Parish is considering two options for the placement of the pump station.

- Option 1 – The placement of the new pump station on the west side of St. Peter's Ditch, near the existing pump station.
- Option 2 – The placement of the new pump station on the east side of St. Peter's Ditch.

The environmental impacts of the placement of new pump station in either of these locations will be similar.

FINDINGS

FEMA has evaluated the proposed project for significant adverse impacts to geology, soils, water resources (surface water, groundwater, and wetlands), floodplains, coastal resources, air quality, biological resources (vegetation, fish and wildlife, Federally-listed threatened or endangered species and critical habitats), cultural resources, socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations), safety, noise, and hazardous materials. The results of these evaluations as well as consultations and input from other federal and state agencies are presented in the EA.

CONDITIONS

The following conditions must be met as part of the implementation of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize federal funds:

Environmental

- In order to minimize impacts to Waters of the U.S., the contractor is required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) that meet the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) permitting specifications for storm water discharge regulated under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). This includes designing the site with specific construction measures to reduce or eliminate run-off impacts.
- Appropriate erosion control measures should be employed during the construction of the project to minimize any adverse effect on the surrounding environment.
- The contractor would be responsible for keeping all excavated areas periodically sprayed with water, all equipment maintained in good working order, and all construction vehicles would be limited to 15 mph to minimize pollution/fugitive dust. In addition, during the construction of the ponds, the contractor would be responsible for keeping the ponds covered during non-work hours to prevent water and air erosion of the ponds during rain events or high winds.

- This project may require a Coastal Use Permit (CUP) from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR). Determination of CUP requirements can be obtained through the submission of a completed CUP application to the LDNR. Projects may be coordinated by contacting LDNR at 225-342-7591 or 1-800-267-4019.
- If the project results in a discharge to waters of the state, submittal of a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) application may be necessary.
- If the project results in a discharge of wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment system, that wastewater treatment system may need to modify its LPDES permit before accepting the additional wastewater.
- LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than five (5) acres. The LDEQ Water Permit Division should be contacted at (225) 219-3181 to obtain any necessary permits.
- All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities.
- All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.
- Please be advised that water softeners generate wastewaters that may require special limitations, depending on local water quality considerations. Therefore, if water system improvements include water softeners, the applicant is advised to contact the LDEQ Water Permits to determine if special water quality-based limitations will be necessary.
- If any of the proposed work is located in wetlands or other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the USACE should be contacted directly to inquire about the possible necessity for permits. If a USACE permit is required, part of the application process may involve a water quality certification from LDEQ.
- The Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) would mitigate the wetland being impacted by construction activities for this project by minimizing impacts as listed in the Department's Standard Specification and mitigate for lost wetland habitats by reseeding with the appropriate plants and seedlings. In addition, the DOTD would coordinate appropriate mitigation planned with the Corps of Engineers.
- The Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges, 2006 edition, requires that the contractor take certain measures toward reducing environmental (wetland) damages. The measures are described in, but not limited to, the following sections:

1. Scope of Work - Section 104
 2. Control of Work – Section 105
 3. Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public – Section 107
 4. Clearing and Grubbing – Section 201
 5. Removal or Relocation of Structures and Obstructions – Section 202
 6. Excavation and Embankment – Section 203
 7. Temporary Erosion Control – Section 204
- Any changes or modifications to the proposed project would require a revised determination. Off-site locations of activities such as borrow, disposals, haul-and detour-roads and work mobilization site developments may be subject to the Department of the Army regulatory requirements and may have an impact to a Department of Army project.
 - If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
 - In accordance with the Formosan Termite Initiative Act, (LA R.S. 3:3391.1 through 3391.13), the Louisiana Parish of Jefferson is under quarantine. The movement of wood or cellulose material, temporary housing, or architectural components (i.e. beams, doors, and other wood salvage from a structure) may not leave the quarantined parish without written authorization from the commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (LDAF) or his designee(s).
 - Due care must be taken to locate any unregistered water wells in the project area. For pipelines and other underground hazards, please contact Louisiana One Call at 1-800-272-3020 prior to commencing operations.
 - During and after the project, consideration must be given for the occurrence of a base flood inundation. At this time, consideration should also be given to the responsibility for clearing debris and keeping the area cleared so as not to interfere with its function.”
 - In order to assure compliance with Jefferson Parish requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and ensure that appropriate permits are obtained, please contact the floodplain administrator for Jefferson Parish. The contact person is: Mr. Tom Rodrigue, 1887 Ames Boulevard, Marrero, Louisiana, 70072, telephone number (504) 349-5360.

Public Safety and Traffic

- Construction traffic should be closely monitored and controlled as appropriate. All construction activities would be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA) requirements. To alert motorists and pedestrians of project activities, appropriate signage and barriers should be used during construction. During construction activities, the construction site(s) would be fenced off to discourage trespassers.

Cultural Resources

- The applicant must comply with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) and the Inadvertent Discovery Clause, which can be found under the Environmental Review National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) conditions. Any change to the approved scope of work would require reevaluation under Section 106.
- Furthermore, if archaeological artifacts or features (prehistoric or historic) are discovered during the course of FEMA funded work at the project site, the Applicant must ensure that their Contractor stops work in the vicinity of the discovery and takes all reasonable measures to avoid and minimize harm to the discovery. The Applicant shall inform the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and FEMA of the discovery, and FEMA would deploy an archaeologist to the location to conduct a site condition assessment. The Applicant would not proceed with work until FEMA has completed consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on the treatment of the discovery.
- In addition, if human remains are discovered during the course of FEMA funded work, the Applicant and the Applicant's Contractor are responsible for immediately halting work within the vicinity of the human remains finding. The Applicant would immediately notify GOHSEP, FEMA, the local Police Department, and the local Coroner's Office of the discovery. The local Coroner's Office would assess the nature and age of the human skeletal remains. If the Coroner's Office determines that the human skeletal remains are older than 50 years of age, the Louisiana Division of Archaeology would take jurisdiction over the remains. Within twenty-four (24) hours, FEMA would notify the Louisiana Division of Archaeology (225-342-8170) of the finding. Within seventy-two (72) hours, FEMA would take the lead in working with the Louisiana Division of Archaeology and other interested parties, as necessary, to ensure compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 et seq.) and other applicable laws. In addition, the Applicant must afford FEMA the opportunity to comply with the "Human Remains Policy" set forth by the ACHP.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVALS

Cynthia Teeter, Deputy Environmental Officer Date
Louisiana Recovery Office
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

Michael Karl Date
Interim Director
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FEMA 1603-1607-DR-LA